

CONGRESSMAN

TONY HALL NEWS

Third District, Ohio

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202 225-6465**EMBARGOED FOR RELEASE:
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#90-18

CONTACT: MICHAEL GESSEL**Majority of House Members Express Concern Over
Repression in East Timor in Year Following Pope's Visit**

WASHINGTON—A broad bipartisan group of 223 House members signed a letter, organized by Rep. Tony P. Hall (D-Ohio) to Secretary of State James A. Baker III, underscoring their deep concern over the "atmosphere of fear and repression" in East Timor following the October 12, 1989 visit of Pope John Paul II where he spoke out for human rights in the territory.

In the letter, to be mailed tomorrow (Monday, November 19), the lawmakers called attention to reports of arrests, detention, torture, and other human rights violations in the last year. Dozens of young East Timorese who demonstrated for human rights and political freedom during the Pope's visit were arrested and abused, the letter charged. Also, many East Timorese who had met with U.S. Ambassador to Indonesia John Monjo in early 1990 were threatened with disappearance.

"We are deeply concerned about such threats as well as recent allegations of executions and repression aimed against those attempting to express their views," a majority of the House of Representatives, including 53 Republicans, said in the letter.

"The United States should use its influence to help ensure that humanitarian needs...are promptly addressed," the letter said. It also said that the United States should "support a process of peace talks" among the parties involved, including the East Timorese.

East Timor, a predominantly Roman Catholic former Portuguese colony, was invaded and illegally occupied by Indonesia in December 1975. (According to Congressional testimony, Indonesian troops were largely equipped with American-supplied materiel.)

The Indonesian invasion was repeatedly condemned by the United Nations, and most recently by a UN Human Rights panel meeting in Geneva in August. At least 100,000 East Timorese out of an original population of less than 700,000 have perished as a result of the Indonesian occupation.

On October 28, 1990, Agence France Presse (AFP) reported an atmosphere of terror in East Timor as a result of a "major" suppression campaign being carried out by Indonesian forces. According to the AFP report, the campaign by Indonesian security forces may include death squad activity.

Hall, who is chairman of the Select Committee on Hunger, has a special concern for the possibility of famine in the territory.

"Indonesian military policies and actions, such as restriction on where Timorese villagers can farm their crops, are causing periodic cycles of hunger in East Timor," the letter said.

The letter continued, "A precarious situation like this is especially alarming when it is recalled that scarcely ten years ago the population of East Timor was decimated by a war-related famine" that experts likened to the situation in Cambodia.

Hall drew a parallel between Indonesia's illegal takeover of East Timor and Iraq's invasion and occupation of Kuwait.

December 7, 1990 will mark the 15th anniversary of the Indonesian invasion of East Timor.

Hall has been advocating improved human rights conditions in East Timor since he came to Congress in 1979.

The text of the letter follows.

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TIMOR
ADD ONE

November 19, 1990

The Honorable James A. Baker III
Secretary of State
Washington, D.C. 20520

Dear Mr. Secretary:

We would like to underscore our deep concern over recent developments in the former Portuguese colony of East Timor, the predominantly Roman Catholic island territory invaded by Indonesia in 1975 and forcibly annexed. We believe that it is of great importance that United States' concern over the Timor situation be stressed at this time.

As you are aware, dozens of people were detained and abused following a pro-independence demonstration during the visit of Pope John Paul II to East Timor on October 12, 1989. In addition, many East Timorese who had called for respect for human rights and political freedom were beaten and bloodied by Indonesian police after leaving an informal meeting with United States Ambassador John Monjo during his visit to East Timor in January. To his credit, Ambassador Monjo registered concern over this situation.

However, after our ambassador's visit, an atmosphere of fear and repression has persisted in East Timor. Subsequently, a top-ranking Indonesian official warned East Timorese to cease their protests against Indonesian rule, particularly in the presence of foreign visitors, or face harsh consequences. It has been reported that those who demonstrated during the ambassador's visit, and their family members, were threatened with disappearance. There have been further reports of repeated, unexplained detention and abuse, in some cases including torture, of a broad group of individuals. We are deeply concerned about such threats as well as repression aimed against those who are peacefully attempting to express their views.

There is also information that more than 100 East Timorese villagers, including women and children, were massacred in a recent Indonesian military operation, said to be in retaliation for the killing of three Indonesian soldiers. The use of East Timorese civilians as "human shields" (similar to the Indonesian "fence of legs" operations in past years) in Indonesian military operations against pro-independence guerrillas in the countryside is further proof that serious human rights violations continue. The "human shield" operations by Indonesian military forces are known to have caused thousands of deaths in the early 1980s, and the recurrence of a similar practice is deeply disturbing.

Indonesian military policies and actions, such as restrictions on where Timorese villagers can farm their crops, are causing periodic cycles of hunger and malnutrition in East Timor. A precarious situation like this is especially alarming when it is recalled that scarcely ten years ago the population of East Timor was decimated by a war-related famine.

The United States should use its influence to help ensure that humanitarian needs of this nature are promptly addressed. This should certainly include a concerted effort to address the reportedly growing problem of tuberculosis in East Timor.

Finally, in light of the continuing tragic consequences of the 15-year-old conflict in East Timor, the United States should support a process of peace talks that could lead to negotiations without preconditions among the parties directly involved.

Thank you for your attention to these concerns.

Sincerely,

William L. Dickinson (R-Ala.)
Morris K. Udall (D-Ariz.)
John Paul Hammerschmidt (R-Ark.)
Tommy F. Robinson (R-Ark.)
Jim Bates (D-Calif.)
Anthony C. Beilenson (D-Calif.)
Howard L. Berman (D-Calif.)
Douglas H. Bosco (D-Calif.)
Barbara Boxer (D-Calif.)
George E. Brown, Jr. (D-Calif.)
Tom Campbell (R-Calif.)
William E. Dannemeyer (R-Calif.)
Ronald V. Dellums (D-Calif.)
Julian C. Dixon (D-Calif.)
Robert K. Dornan (R-Calif.)
Mervyn M. Dymally (D-Calif.)
Don Edwards (D-Calif.)
Vic Fazio (D-Calif.)
Augustus F. Hawkins (D-Calif.)
Tom Lantos (D-Calif.)
Mel Levine (D-Calif.)
Bill Lowery (R-Calif.)
Matthew G. Martinez (D-Calif.)
Robert T. Matsui (D-Calif.)
George Miller (D-Calif.)
Norman Y. Mineta (D-Calif.)

Nancy Pelosi (D-Calif.)
Leon E. Panetta (D-Calif.)
Dana Rohrabacher (R-Calif.)
Edward R. Roybal (D-Calif.)
Fortney Pete Stark (D-Calif.)
Esteban Edward Torres (D-Calif.)
Henry A. Waxman (D-Calif.)
Sam Gejdenson (D-Conn.)
Barbara B. Kennelly (D-Conn.)
Bruce A. Morrison (D-Conn.)
John G. Rowland (R-Conn.)
Christopher Shays (R-Conn.)
Ben Nighthorse Campbell (D-Colo.)
Joel Hefley (R-Colo.)
Patricia Schroeder (D-Colo.)
Dan Schaefer (R-Colo.)
David E. Skaggs (D-Colo.)
Thomas R. Carper (D-Del.)
Dante B. Fascell (D-Fla.)
Bill McCollum (R-Fla.)
Bill Nelson (D-Fla.)
Ileana Ros-Lehtinen (R-Fla.)
E. Clay Shaw, Jr. (R-Fla.)
Lawrence J. Smith (D-Fla.)
John Lewis (D-Ga.)
Richard H. Stallings (D-Ida.)

Frank Annunzio (D-Ill.)
Terry L. Bruce (D-Ill.)
Cardiss Collins (D-Ill.)
Richard J. Durbin (D-Ill.)
Lane Evans (D-Ill.)
Harris W. Fawell (R-Ill.)
Dennis J. Hastert (R-Ill.)
Charles A. Hayes (D-Ill.)
Henry J. Hyde (R-Ill.)
William Lipinski (D-Ill.)
Lynn Martin (R-Ill.)
John Edward Porter (R-Ill.)
Glenn Poshard (D-Ill.)
Marty Russo (D-Ill.)
Gus Savage (D-Ill.)
Sidney R. Yates (D-Ill.)
Lee H. Hamilton (D-Ind.)
John Hiler (R-Ind.)
Andrew Jacobs (D-Ind.)
Jim Jontz (D-Ind.)
Jill L. Long (D-Ind.)
Frank McCloskey (D-Ind.)
Peter J. Visclosky (D-Ind.)
David R. Nagle (D-Iowa)
Thomas J. Tauke (R-Iowa)
Dan Glickman (D-Kans.)

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TIMOR
ADD TWO

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Helen Delich Bentley (R-Md.)
Beverly B. Byron (D-Md.)
Benjamin L. Cardin (D-Md.)
Roy Dyson (D-Md.)
Steny H. Hoyer (D-Md.)
C. Thomas McMillen (D-Md.)
Kweisi Mfume (D-Md.)
Constance A. Morella (R-Md.)
Chester G. Atkins (D-Mass.)
Silvio O. Conte (R-Mass.)
Barney Frank (D-Mass.)
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Edward J. Markey (D-Mass.)
Nicholas Mavroules (D-Mass.)
John Joseph Moakley (D-Mass.)
Richard E. Neal (D-Mass.)
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Timothy J. Penny (D-Minn.)
Martin Olav Sabo (D-Minn.)
Gerry Sikorski (D-Minn.)
Bruce F. Vento (D-Minn.)
Mike Espy (D-Miss.)
Jack Buechner (R-Mo.)
William Clay (D-Mo.)
Bill Emerson (R-Mo.)
Ike Skelton (D-Mo.)
Alan Wheat (D-Mo.)
Pat Williams (D-Mont.)
Doug Bereuter (R-Nebr.)
Peter Hoagland (D-Nebr.)
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Christopher H. Smith (R-N.J.)
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Thomas J. Downey (D-N.Y.)
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George J. Hochbrueckner (R-N.Y.)
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Bill Green (R-N.Y.)
Frank Horton (R-N.Y.)
Amo Houghton (R-N.Y.)
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Louise M. Slaughter (D-N.Y.)
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H. Martin Lancaster (D-N.C.)
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Charles Rose (D-N.C.)
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Tony P. Hall (D-Ohio)
Dennis E. Eckart (D-Ohio)
Marcy Kaptur (D-Ohio)
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Bob McEwen (R-Ohio)
Mary Rose Oaker (D-Ohio)
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Dave McCurdy (D-Okla.)
Mike Synar (D-Okla.)
Les AuCoin (D-Oreg.)
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Robert A. Borski (D-Pa.)
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Thomas A. Foglietta (D-Pa.)
William H. Gray III (D-Pa.)
Joe Kolter (D-Pa.)
Peter H. Kostmayer (D-Pa.)
Austin J. Murphy (D-Pa.)
Doug Walgren (D-Pa.)
Robert S. Walker (R-Pa.)
Curt Weldon (R-Pa.)
Gus Yatron (D-Pa.)
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Claudine Schneider (R-R.I.)
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Harold E. Ford (D-Tenn.)
John Bryant (D-Tex.)
Albert G. Bustamante (D-Tex.)
Ronald D. Coleman (D-Tex.)
Martin Frost (D-Tex.)
Henry B. Gonzalez (D-Tex.)
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Charles Wilson (D-Tex.)
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Wayne Owens (D-Utah)
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Thomas J. Bliley (R-Va.)
Rick Boucher (D-Va.)
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D. French Slaughter, Jr. (R-Va.)
Frank R. Wolf (R-Va.)
Jim McDermott (D-Wash.)
John Miller (R-Wash.)
Sid Morrison (R-Wash.)
Al Swift (D-Wash.)
Jolene Unsoeld (D-Wash.)
Alan B. Mollohan (D-W. Va.)
Harley O. Staggers, Jr. (D-W. Va.)
Robert W. Kastenmeier (D-Wisc.)
Gerald D. Kleczka (D-Wisc.)
Jim Moody (D-Wisc.)
David K. Obey (D-Wisc.)

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